

THE HORUS HERESY<sup>®</sup>  
EXEMPLARY BATTLES  
OF THE AGE OF DARKNESS



THE DEFENCE OF SOTHA:  
AEGIDA'S LAMENT



# EXEMPLARY BATTLES

As the Age of Darkness ground ever onwards, the fires of war would spread throughout the entire galaxy, consuming everything in their path. Armies and worlds were reduced to nothing more than ash, in many cases leaving no one alive to bear witness to the sacrifices made or the atrocities committed. During this time, each Legion employed unique formations to prosecute their own style of war, whether by choice or through necessity, making use of unconventional, often abhorrent, tactics

and weapons. Many of these formations would be lost during the dark years following the Horus Heresy, their traditions wiped out and the last stockpiles of their weapons exhausted. Some, however, have been preserved in these records, that future generations may learn of the terrors unleashed upon the galaxy by the Emperor's turncoat sons and the valiant heroes who stood against them.



In the latter years of 010.M31 a brutal storm would engulf the isolated system of Sotha. The ragged fleets of the Night Lords Legion, fresh from the murderous crucible of the Thramas Crusade, shattered the orbital defences of the Ultramarines and seized control of this remote corner of Ultramar. Such an act would swiftly draw the ire of the Lords of the Five Hundred Worlds, whose warships outnumbered those of the Night Lords, and seemed an ill-considered onslaught if the prize was no more than a frontier world on the edge of the Imperium. Yet, Sotha held something more valuable than resources or conscripts – an artefact known as the Pharos. This device was the key to the Ultramarines' defences and a prize that would allow the warlords of the Night Lords to claim the favour of Warmaster Horus.

One among these disparate warlords was chosen to lead the initial assault on the planet – Claw Master Zaar Siakaar. A warrior whose ambition outstripped his caution, he boasted of the victory his troops would win at Sotha even as the assembled Night Lords looked on. Such a victory would see him rise high in the esteem of his leaderless Legion, with the Night Haunter missing since the final battle of the Thramas Crusade, and grant him a chance

at true power. Yet, few of the more established captains of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion cared for the braggadocio of such an upstart whelp. These grim veterans granted the Claw Master his opportunity, with several even offering their supply of warriors from the elite Atramentar to support his assault. Blinded by dreams of glory, Zaar Siakaar took them at their word and moved his ships to the vanguard of the fleet.

Claw Master Siakaar's planetfall was preceded by a barrage of macro-cannon shells and incendiary munitions, indiscriminately dropped among the habitation zones to demolish buildings and ignite a conflagration that quickly spread through the city of Sothopolis. Waves of drop pods and planetary assault craft swiftly followed, carrying the bulk of seven companies – with Siakaar's company and the Atramentar at the fore. Thousands of missiles streaked up into the sky on trails of burning promethium, followed by volleys of laser fire from Sotha's anti-air batteries, turning the skies into a seething storm of fire. Yet, for every drop pod that perished, dozens more landed amid the outskirts of the city to disgorge their deadly cargo. Within a few short hours, the horizon was engulfed in black clouds of smoke as the Night Lords



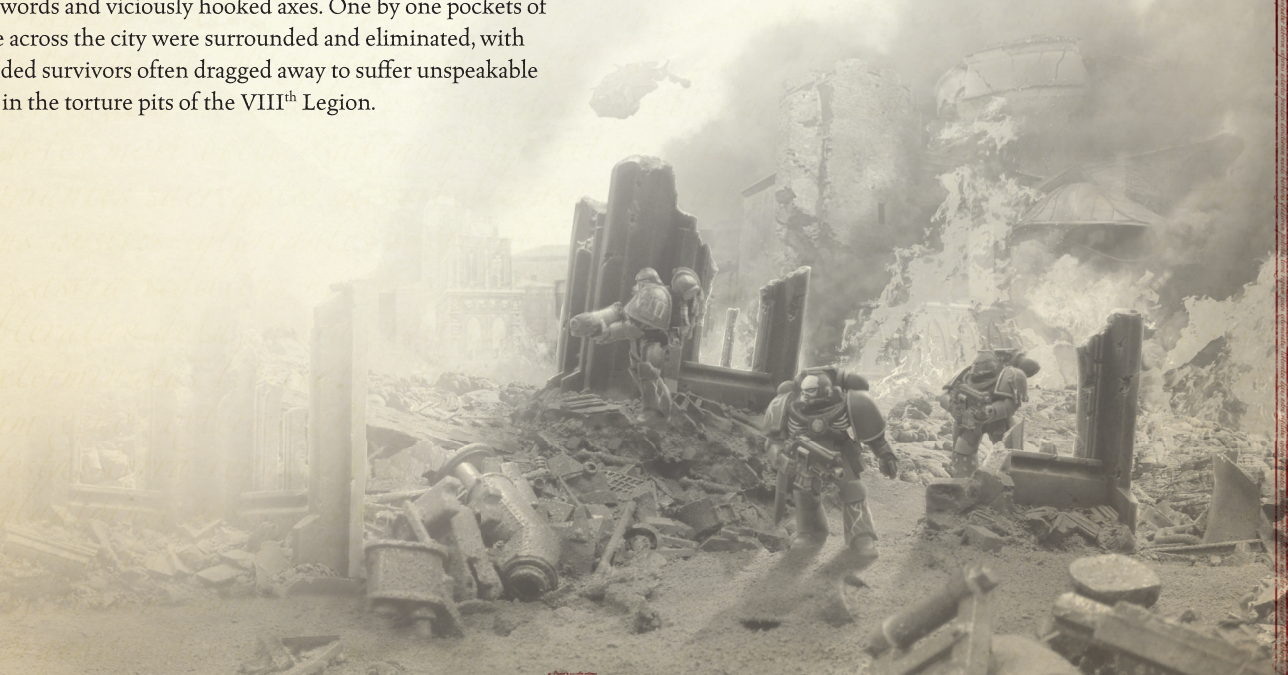
rampaged through the streets of the dying city, falling upon the hastily drawn up ranks of the Ultramarines' Aegida Company as it vainly tried to defend the city and its inhabitants.

Claw Master Zaar Siakaar presided over the assault from his personal command Spartan, co-ordinating the actions of his warriors as they swept through the city. Serving as his personal guard were a cadre of the elite Atramentar Terminators. These vicious killers were drawn from the missing Captain Sevatar's First Company, now spread out amongst the warbands and companies of the fractious VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion to act as enforcers for the other warlords of the Legion. An armoured spearhead amassed around the command Spartan; Land Raider Proteus carriers and Deimos pattern Rhinos carrying the Legion's assault troops, supported by swift Sabre Strike tanks and heavily armed Sicaran Punishers. Siakaar sent a single coded vox-signal across all VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion frequencies and the vehicle column surged forwards through the streets of Sothopolis towards the XIII<sup>th</sup> Legion Castellum defending the approaches that led to the mountain where the Pharos lay hidden.

The invasion quickly became a massacre, the Night Lords venting the rage of their defeat at Thramas on the defenders of Sotha. Proteus pattern Land Speeders and Legion Outrider squadrons ranged ahead of the main invasion force to herd Sotha's fleeing population down the capital's streets and into the waiting blades of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion. The revving of chainblades and the roar of bolters combined with the screams of the terrified population to form a cacophony of misery that echoed across Sothopolis. The Ultramarines engaged the invaders in a fighting retreat, buying time with their lives holding makeshift roadblocks in a valiant effort to evacuate as many civilians from the city as possible. The overwhelming enemy numbers began to tell and the Ultramarines rigged charges to send sections of buildings collapsing across the Night Lords' line of advance, crushing Legionaries and blocking the passage of armoured vehicles. Still, the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion came on, Siakaar and the Atramentar crushing all resistance beneath the treads of their mighty Spartan. Packs of Night Raptors ranged ahead of the tank formation, leaping over the wreckage using controlled bursts from their jump packs to land among the warriors of Ultramar and slice them apart with serrated swords and viciously hooked axes. One by one pockets of resistance across the city were surrounded and eliminated, with the wounded survivors often dragged away to suffer unspeakable torments in the torture pits of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion.

The tattered remnants of the Ultramarines garrison chose to make their stand at Attican Square, a natural choke point where all the roads leading to the Castellum converged. Centurion Vieron Ekarr, the last of the Ultramarines officers left in the city, took the opportunity to rally the withdrawing forces of his Legion as the Night Lords paused their advance to terrorise and butcher the civilians trapped within the city. Despite the chaos of the retreat, the disciplined centurion managed to assemble a sizable force of defenders – from battered phalanxes of Breachers to the grim ranks of his Suzerain bodyguard. These vengeful warriors locked their shields together in front of a marble statue of Roboute Guilliman carrying the torch of Imperial Unity, determined to hold beneath the gaze of their Primarch and delay the enemy long enough for those that had already evacuated the city to fortify the Castellum against the Night Lords' assault. A pair of Deredeo class Dreadnoughts took up position on either side of the monument, Ancients Menarrio and Argan training the barrels of their Anvilus autocannon batteries to the skies, while alongside them, the few remaining Predator and Sicaran battle tanks of the Ultramarines blocked the enemy's advance towards the Castellum.

The Night Lords responded in a fashion typical of their cruel nature, herding hundreds of captured civilians into the square, each with their eyelids sewn together or their eyeballs plucked from their skulls. Behind the throng of unfortunate Sothans came squadrons of Night Lords Land Raiders and Rhino armoured transports, speeding into the square with the still-living bodies of captured Ultramarines neophytes pinned to their hulls with their skin flayed in agonising and depraved parodies of the Emperor's aquila. The XIII<sup>th</sup> Legion tanks belatedly opened fire, stunned into inaction for a brief but decisive moment, and though several of the enemy vehicles disappeared in a storm of explosive rounds and plasma blasts, most crossed the square unharmed. The assault group rolled over the stumbling civilians, leaving trails of broken bodies and rivers of blood behind them as they came to a grinding halt before the Ultramarines' position. Assault ramps dropped with a resounding crash and through the darkness of their interiors came the Despoiler and Terror squads of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion, scores of Legionaries charging towards the cobalt blue shieldwall with a murderous fury.





Vieron Ekarr positioned himself within the front rank, a wall of gold and blue armoured bodies surrounding the last surviving officer of the Ultramarines, the shields of his men overlapping against each other to form a protective barrier. The order *ciringite frontem* was given and the well-drilled Ultramarines Legionaries responded by lifting their shields higher, bracing for the charge. The lead Night Lords lashed out with chainblades and bolt pistols, seeking an opening in the shieldwall that would break the formation. Many found themselves hurled from their feet by the press of their enemies' boarding shields slamming back as one. The shieldwall opened and the Suzerains cut the nearest Night Lords down with swift strikes of their Legatine power axes before closing ranks again. The charge lost momentum and faltered, many Night Lords forced to defend themselves while others still pressed the attack.

The Ultramarines fought in the disciplined manner their Legion was renowned for, blocking and thrusting with their gladii power swords to kill or maim their opponents. The Night Lords fought as brawlers and murderers, using the bodies of their fallen as stepping stones to jump over the shieldwall where they dragged their enemies to the ground, hacking at soft armour joints and firing their bolt pistols point blank into eye lenses. Xiphon Interceptors and Fire Raptors in the midnight-blue of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion dived from the sky and flew through the streets to strafe the rear of the Ultramarines' positions with a hail of Avenger bolt cannon shells and lascannon blasts, suicidally braving the Castellum's anti-air batteries in an effort to drain their ammunition reserves out of pure murderous spite. Dozens of Legionaries were torn to bloody shreds and Predator tanks were reduced to flaming wrecks before a stream of armour piercing rounds from the Ultramarines Deredeo Ancients sent the enemy aircraft crashing into the fire-blackened buildings of Sothopolis. Ultramarines and Night Lords dead littered the ground, the XIII<sup>th</sup> Legion's defensive formation now reduced to just a third of its original size.

The shieldwall reformed around the statue of Guilliman, its features now scarred by gunfire and stained with soot and blood; those injured Ultramarines fortunate enough to be dragged into the cover of the shieldwall by Legion Apothecaries fired their weapons over the shoulders of their brothers in the front. Time seemed to slow down to the warriors of the two Legions as they fought to a bitter standstill with both sides stubbornly refusing to yield. With the battle stagnating, a lone Spartan assault tank sitting silent among the Night Lords vehicles powered up its engines. The metal behemoth moved ponderously at first and then picked up speed as it drove towards the swirling melee at the square's edge. Sensing the Loyalists were now weakened enough by his expendable troops, Claw Master Siakaar and his aloof Atramentar guard deemed it was time to enter the fray and claim an easy victory. The Spartan crashed into the close press of Ultramarines and Night Lords, indiscriminately grinding armoured bodies into bloody pulp under its mighty tracks.

The shieldwall broke and the Night Lords poured their numbers through the gap to swarm the beleaguered Ultramarines. The Spartan's hatches opened and out of them charged Siakaar and the Atramentar. Hulking warriors clad in debased midnight-blue armour, festooned with trophies torn from human bodies, the Atramentar lashed left and right with their Nostraman chainglaives, butchering all in their path. Ultramarines were hacked down like wheat before the scythe and even Night Lords Legionaries who strayed too close to the Claw Master were not spared their wrath, the Atramentar showing little trust to their perfidious brothers since the fracturing of their Legion. Two of the Atramentar singled out Centurion Vieron Ekarr among his brethren by his magnificently sculpted artificer plate and lashed out at him with their Nostraman chainglaives, seeking to claim a kill that would seal the battle's outcome. The Ultramarines Centurion barely held his ground against the monstrous Terminators, his surviving three Suzerains rushing to their lord's defence. One of the Atramentar grabbed a nearby Night Lord and shoved him in the way of the charging Suzerains, delaying them long enough for him to shoot one of Ultramar's champions through the chest with his plasma blastgun before crashing into the rest, wildly swinging his chainglaive in wide arcs. Still engaged in combat with the other Atramentar, Vieron Ekarr failed to see the dark form of Siakaar step in behind him. The bladed fingers of a lightning claw erupted from the Ultramarine's chest, tearing apart both of his hearts, before his helmet and head were ripped brutally from his body by the whirring teeth of a chainglaive.

With the death of their commander, the remaining Ultramarines were truly broken and the last of their number fell amidst the shattered armour and buckled shields of their brethren. Only corpses and ash marked the Ultramarines' brief stand in Attican Square, and Claw Master Siakaar stood upon the verge of glory, his position among the new warlords of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion all but guaranteed by this triumph. As the Claw Master paused to cut his mark upon the bloodied corpse of Centurion Ekarr, the Atramentar assigned to him by his allies closed about him, blades raised and bolters cycling. The hulking Terminators grimly followed the orders given to them in orbit, to eliminate the vainglorious Claw Master who had dared to step beyond his place. Siakaar had forgotten the strictures that the Night Haunter had instilled in his sons: glory and honour were worthless and victory was fleeting. It was only the will to wield the knife that mattered, that and the strength to direct where it fell.



## NIGHT LORDS ATRAMENTAR SQUAD

270 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Atramentar	5	4	4	4	1	4	2	8	2+
Atramentar Trucidor	5	4	4	4	1	4	3	9	2+

### Unit Composition

- 4 Atramentar
- 1 Atramentar Trucidor

### Unit Type

- Atramentar: Infantry
- Atramentar Trucidor: Infantry (Character)

### Wargear

- Combi-bolter
- Power weapon (any type)
- Tartaros pattern Terminator armour
- Teleportation transponder
- Trophies of Judgement

### Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Night Lords)
- Implacable Advance
- Cloaked in Murder
- Sworn Loyalty

### Options

- The Atramentar Squad may take:
  - Up to 15 additional Atramentar ..... +30 points each
- For every five models in the squad, one Atramentar may exchange their combi-bolter for one of the following special weapons:
  - Heavy flamer ..... +10 points
  - Reaper autocannon ..... +15 points
  - Plasma blaster ..... +15 points
- Any Atramentar and/or the Trucidor may exchange their combi-bolter for one of the following:
  - Combi-weapon ..... +7 points each
  - Volkite charger ..... +7 points each
- Any Atramentar and/or the Trucidor may exchange their power weapon for one of the following:
  - Nostraman chainglaive ..... Free
  - Power fist ..... +5 points each
  - Lightning claw ..... +5 points each
  - Chainfist ..... +10 points each
  - Thunder hammer ..... +15 points each
- Any Atramentar and/or the Trucidor may exchange both their power weapon and combi-bolter for a:
  - Pair of lightning claws ..... +15 points
- The Trucidor may take any of the following:
  - Grenade harness ..... +10 points
  - Headsman's axe ..... +10 points

### Cloaked in Murder

*For the warriors of the Atramentar, no deed is beneath them and any pretence of honourable combat has long since been abandoned. Seeking only to end their enemy in the most painful and undignified manner they use deception and trickery to make spiteful and underhanded attacks, never facing their opponent in an honest engagement, even stooping to pushing their own brethren before a killing blow in order to make a counter themselves.*

Any successful charge made against a unit that includes models with this special rule, and that is not already engaged in combat, counts as Disordered.

### Sworn Loyalty

Night Lords Atramentar Squads may be selected as Troops choices in any detachment that includes Sevatar, but only if Sevatar has been chosen as the Warlord of that army, and count as Legion Terminator Squads for the purposes of the Master of the Atramentar special rule. In addition, Atramentar Squads are no longer scoring units for the purposes of capturing objectives should the Warlord of the army they are part of be removed as a casualty.

## ELITES

The Terminator armour-clad elite of the Night Lords 1<sup>st</sup> Company, the Atramentar were armed with the finest weapons the Legion possessed and wielded them with murderous talent. Along with this fearsome armament and formidable killing prowess, the Atramentar were also just as fractious and rebellious as the rest of their Legion. The task of commanding such a force was only achieved by the strongest willed of leaders, those willing and capable of demonstrating what they asked of their charges on the countless battlefields of the Great Crusade. It was in these circumstances that the Atramentar excelled as shock troops, with all their irascibility and spite correctly channelled, ready to be unleashed in a crescendo of savagery against any that dared to stand before them.



## UNIT SHOWCASE

Shown below are some examples of Night Lords Atramentar squads that have been built and painted by members of the studio staff. The units wear modified Tartaros pattern armour, which bear grizzly Trophies of Judgement in the form of flayed skin and skulls alongside other symbols of the dread VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion. Both squads are based on the Tartaros Terminator Squad Set with a selection of upgrade parts from the Forge World range, including Night Lords Contekar Terminator Elite, the Night Lords Legion Terror Squad Upgrade Pack heads and the Night Lords Legion Nostraman Chainlaives Upgrade Set.







# SOTHOPOLIS BURNS LEGENDARY MISSION

Barring the path of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Legion intent on plundering Sotha and taking control of the Pharos device, stood the garrison force of the Ultramarines 199<sup>th</sup> Company, in the capital city of Sothopolis. Cloaked in shadow and deceit, the invasion of the Night Lords took the sons of Guilliman and the population of Sotha by surprise, leaving scant resistance to the planetary assault

they embarked upon. Here amongst the burning ruins of their once proud city, the Ultramarines would make their stand against the overwhelming assault of the Night Lords in a defiant bid to prevent the mysterious artifact within Mount Pharos from falling into the hands of the Traitors.



## MISSION: HONOUR IN DUTY

This mission depicts the valiant stand of the Ultramarines at the Attican Square of Sothopolis against the savage onslaught of the Night Lords. Knowing they would eventually be overrun, the warriors of the XIII<sup>th</sup> Legion remain stalwart against the tide of treachery. Scant few warriors stood against a numerically superior foe, but those that did made their enemy pay in spilled blood for every forward stride. Every moment they could delay the inevitable was another moment the orbital guns of the Castellum were free to hurl defiant fire into the sky and that the ultimate prize of the Pharos remained out of the Traitors' reach.

### THE ARMIES

The Night Lords player should take the role of the Attacker and the Ultramarines player the role of Defender. Players should choose their armies using *The Horus Heresy: Age of Darkness* rules.

The Defender must take one Fortification choice and may take more than one if their chosen Force Organisation chart allows. The Defender may not choose to place any models in Reserves, meaning some Rites of War may not be taken, and any models that cannot be deployed in the deployment zone count as destroyed. The Attacker may not take any Fortification choices.

### SETTING UP THE GAME

The Attican Square of the city of Sothopolis is typical of those found across the Five Hundred Worlds of Ultramar. For this mission, any suitable Citadel Miniatures terrain can be used to represent the urban ruins of the once serene city and provide clear avenues down which the attackers can advance.

- The Defender's deployment zone should represent a sector of the Attican Square itself, with enough clear space to allow the deployment of fortifications.
- An imposing piece of terrain such as the Battle Sanctum can be used in conjunction with other terrain to represent the point of the defender's last stand.

### DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off to see who will deploy first.
- Before deploying, the Attacker may deploy up to half of the units in their force as normal. For every other unit roll a D6. On a roll of 1-3, the unit may be deployed as normal. On a roll of 4-6, the unit must enter Reserves.
- Once the game begins, the Attacker should make Reserve rolls for units of different types in the following order, starting on the indicated turn:
  - Turn 2 onwards – Troops, Fast Attack
  - Turn 3 onwards – Troops, Fast Attack, Elites, HQ, Heavy Support
  - Turn 4 onwards – All remaining units are automatically available and no dice are rolled.

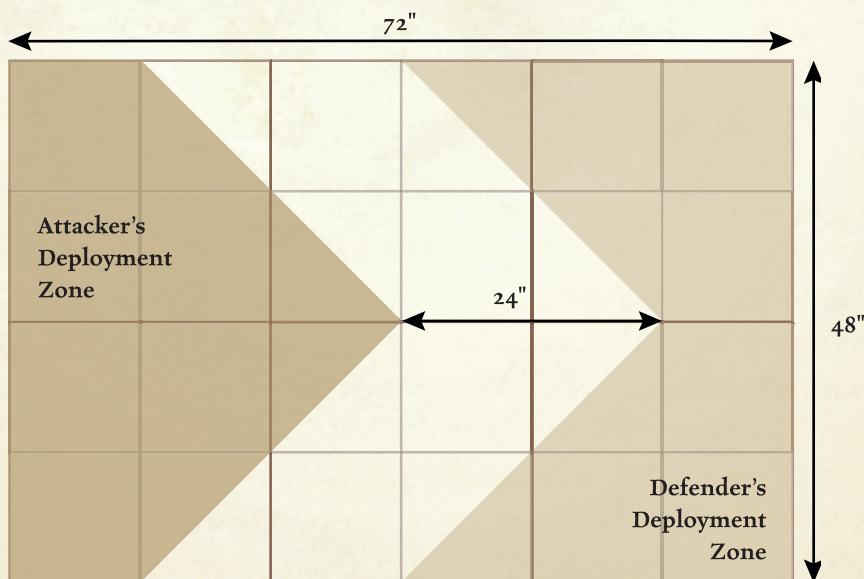
When the Attacker's reserves become available, they enter play from the Attacker's table edge.

### FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first also has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative.

### GAME LENGTH

The game uses the Variable Game Length rules in Battles in the *Age of Darkness, The Horus Heresy: Age of Darkness* rulebook.





## VICTORY CONDITIONS

Vowing to take no backward step, the defenders choose to make their stand and cut down as many of their assailants as they can before they themselves fall. The attackers have no such noble goals and simply seek to slaughter and desecrate those that stand before them as quickly as possible.

### Primary Objectives

The Attacker gains 1 Victory point for each friendly scoring unit that is wholly within the Defender's deployment zone at the end of the game.

The Defender scores 1 Victory point for each enemy unit that has been completely destroyed.

Units that are Falling Back at the end of the game and units that are not on the board at the end of the game count as destroyed for the purposes of this mission.

### Secondary Objectives

**Slay the Warlord:** If a side destroys the enemy Warlord, they gain an extra Victory point.

**First Blood:** The first unit of any kind to be completely destroyed during the game is worth 1 Victory point to the opposing player at the end of the game.

**Last Man Standing:** The side with the greatest number of surviving units at the end of the game gains an extra Victory point.

**Hold Fast:** For each additional turn after turn 4 that the game continues, the Defender gains an additional Victory point.

If at the end of the game, the amount of Victory points is tied, the Defender may claim a pyrrhic victory if there are any friendly models, not including Fortifications, remaining in their deployment zone.

### MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Night Fighting
- Reserves



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